



Cigarettes, like drugs are a lucrative business for smugglers. This file photo shows confiscated cigarettes burned by customs officials.

April 7 is World's 1st No Tobacco Day

Smoke to smoke, ashes to ashes

In this first of two articles Sana Atiyeh reports on the dangers of smoking and the business behind it

AMMAN — Lung cancer, a killer disease that is the direct result of smoking tobacco, is found in countries where cigarettes have been available for at least 20 years. In Jordan, cigarettes have been manufactured since 1931.

Medical research has confirmed that smoking is the easiest way to contract lung cancer, depending on the number of cigarettes smoked. Lung cancer is the most common form of cancer diseases, affecting 25 per cent of all cancer sufferers and 95 per cent of these have been caused by smoking. The death rate from lung cancer in heavy smokers is forty times higher than that of non-smokers.

Smoking tobacco is not only a major cause of lung cancer and other lung diseases, but also coronary diseases and ulcers. Smokers also run a higher risk of other forms of cancer: Mouth, throat, trachea, bronchus, pharynx, larynx, pancreas, bladder and kidney cancers. Most patients with chronic bronchitis and breathing difficulties are described as being mostly smokers. In the United States for example, a 1984 report indicates that the death ratios between smokers and non-smokers from chronic lung diseases was even greater than those with lung cancer.

Studies also indicate that smokers have a higher risk in experiencing an increase in the occurrence and recurrence of peptic ulcers, and a delay in their healing, from which the risk of death is doubled for smokers

According to World Health Organisation (WHO) figures, 2.5 million people around the world die each year from diseases related to tobacco smoking.

In the United Kingdom alone, at least 100,000 people die each year from causes related to smoking, according to research. This number exceeds the number of deaths from 2,000 Jumbo Jets crashing each year. In terms of numbers of deaths and illness which cigarette smoking causes in the Middle East, studies show that victims of smoking are rapidly catching up with Western countries.

Smoking tobacco also reduces women's fertility. It affects the reproductive system and in many cases it delays conception. Some women-smokers may altogether become infertile. Smoking also reduces the strength of the male sperm.

All doctors agree that smoking should be avoided during pregnancy. Smoking mothers have smaller babies of lower birth-weight than non-smokers, and habitual smoking after the fourth month of pregnancy can result in mental and physical retardation in later childhood. This is due to the lack of oxygen that reaches the brain of the fetus.

Smoking in Jordan

According to the latest study conducted on smoking in Jordan at the end of 1982, about 58 per cent of the population — 71 per cent of the males and 44 per cent of the females — between the

ages of 15 and 70 indulge in the habit of tobacco smoking. The study, published by the University of Jordan, showed that 52 per cent of smokers consume 20 to 39 cigarettes a day, 15 per cent smoke 40 to 59, and four per cent smoke 60 to 70 cigarettes a day.

The survey also showed that 57 per cent of smokers started the habit between the ages of 15 and 19, and 26 per cent started between the ages of 20 and 29. The highest percentage of smokers were found among mechanics (89 per cent), drivers (84 per cent), and labourers (80 per cent). It was also found that 51 per cent of physicians were smokers. The lowest rate of smokers was among housewives, with 37.3 per cent, according to the study.

There are several efforts being exerted in Jordan to combat tobacco smoking. The Health Ministry recently launched a campaign to enforce regulations banning smoking in public transport and public gathering halls, such as cinemas and theatres. According to the ministry's regulations, "no smoking" signs shall be displayed in all public places, and that those places that do not abide by the regulations could be emboldened or closed down.

There is also the national Jordanian Anti-Smoking Society which campaigns against smoking. Dr. Samih Amer intends to open an anti-smoking clinic to help addicts to quit.

Case histories

Several smokers, and smokers who quit were interviewed by the Jordan Times. All those interviewed agreed that smoking is addictive, and all those who quit

admitted that they felt physically and psychologically healthier than they did when they were smoking. They also agreed that after quitting, tobacco smoke from others began to bother them. All of them said that they quit for health reasons.

"My doctor told me: 'You either breathe or smoke. You cannot have both'." Joseph, 35, told the Jordan Times. After smoking two packs a day for fifteen years, Joseph quit only three months ago because he was suffering from severe breathing difficulties.

"I started having dizzy spells, and my chest hurt at night and it took me hours before I was able to sleep. I would stay up till two or three in the morning," Joseph said.

He admitted that he sometimes feels an urge to smoke but when he remembers how he felt when he smoked, his urge disappears. He believes that if one is psychologically convinced of smoking hazardous effects then stopping to smoke is very easy.

"I sleep much easier at night and my lungs feel clean. When I wake up I feel fresh and healthy. My food tastes better and my sense of smell is coming back after being dormant for so many years. When I quit smoking I weighed 54 kilograms; now I weigh 62." Joseph confessed, adding that it now bothers him when others smoke around him. He said that it was easier to quit not having anyone in his home who smokes.

Walid, 47, smoked a pack of cigarettes a day for ten years before he quit and never smoked again. He said that he stopped after seeing a television programme that showed the lungs of a smoker (black) and a non-smoker's (red).

"The only negative aspect of not smoking was that I gained so much weight. But my sexual urge definitely improved," Walid added, noting a point agreed by all those who quit smoking.

Salma, 25, smoked up to two packs a day for seven years before she quit three weeks ago. She said that she always wanted to quit "everytime I put my cigarette out. But I had to quit for sure this time because I reached a point where walking up two flights of stairs was almost impossible," she told the Jordan Times.

Salma added that she still smokes two to four cigarettes a day, but does not buy them anymore. Though she refused to admit that she is addicted to

cigarettes her excuse of smoking several cigarettes a day is: "I smoke occasionally in order to remind myself that what I'm missing is not so great, and to enjoy the pleasure of smoking at the same time."

Some people do not want to quit smoking and most of the time cannot. Ruba, 25, started smoking three and a half years ago. She started with five cigarettes a day and now smokes up to thirty. She tried to quit twice and only succeeded for two months.

"I started getting nervous and easily irritated, and I craved for a cigarette after my meals," she confessed. Although Ruba admits that she has difficulties breathing when she sleeps at night, and suffers from throat pains, she said: "I enjoy smoking."

Ruba, who grew up with smoking parents, added that it does not bother her if she might get lung cancer from smoking. "I'm going to die anyway and it does not scare me," she claimed.

Another heavy smoker who has been indulging in this habit for over 20 years admits that he is both physically and psychologically addicted to tobacco and particularly cigarettes.

Abdullah, 42, said that he would not, and could not quit until he reaches a point of being severely sick. "I have to keep fainting, get cancer or suffer a heart attack before I completely stop smoking," he noted, adding that he suffers from dizzy spells and physical fatigue.

This smoker has a dilemma with cigarettes because he enjoys and hates smoking at the same time. Abdullah, however, believes that if smoking was not allowed in the office, where he spends most of the hours of his day, and public places, he would either quit the habit completely or at least cut down tremendously.

Most of those who are habitual smokers know the damages and dangers of tobacco smoking and know its addictive nature. But yet, there are many who refuse and cannot quit, and do not want to suffer the temporary withdrawal symptoms: Irritability, aggression, anxiety, inability to concentrate and a severe craving for tobacco which often leads to relapse and to the failure of subsequent attempts at abstinence. But smokers must remember that being obnoxious for a few months is better than suffering an early, painful and slow death.

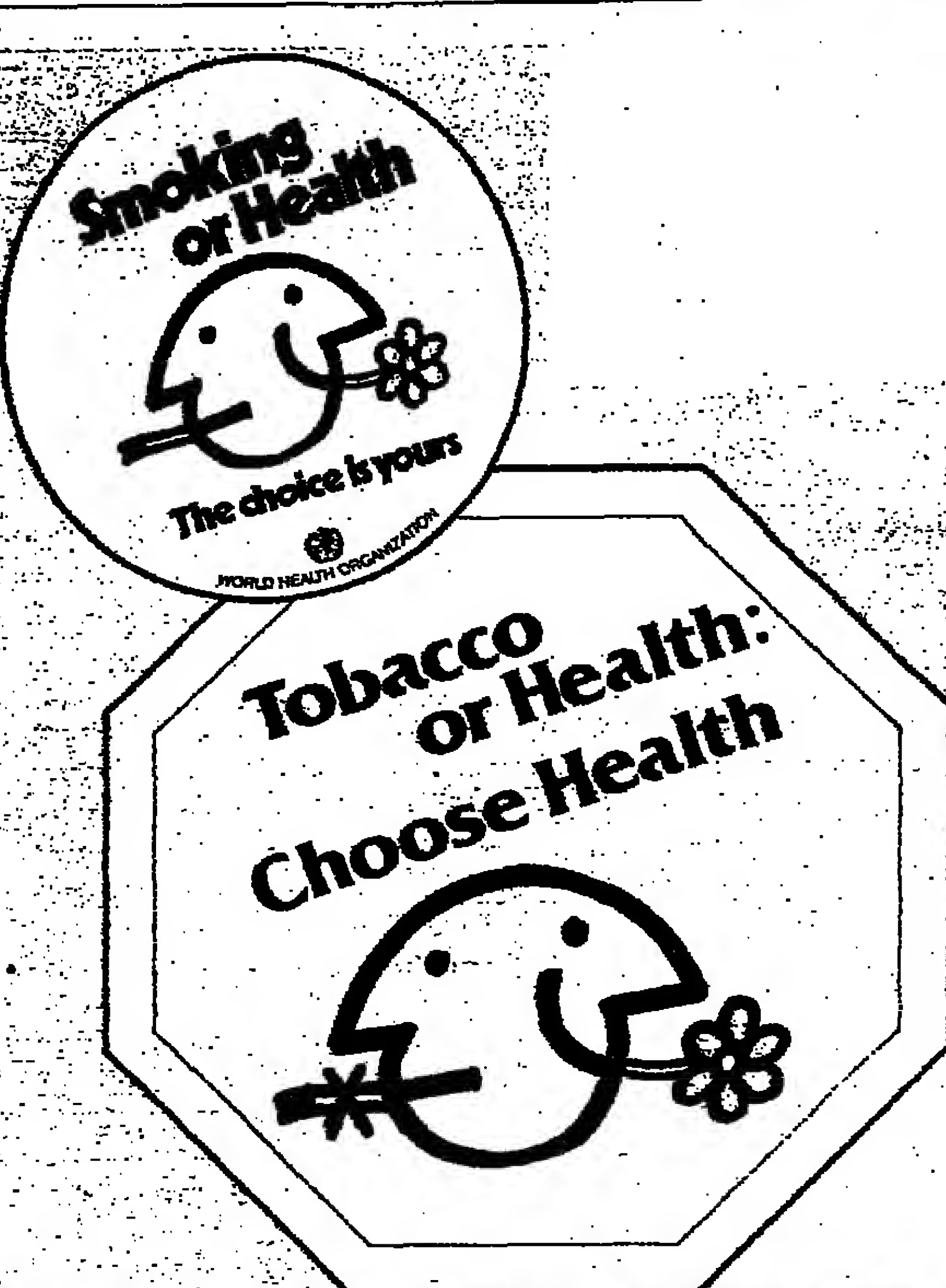
Smokeless cigarette dangerous to your health

TOKYO — A World Health Assembly resolution which states that "tobacco in all its forms is compatible with the attainment of health" commits nations to take action against the new so-called "smokeless cigarette," according to Dr. Roberto Masironi, chief of the World Health Organisation's tobacco or health programme.

The resolution sets out a world-wide campaign against what is described as the "current pandemic of smoking and other forms of tobacco use," he explained, and was adopted by WHO's governing authority in May 1986. Its provisions are binding morally on the member states.

The smokeless cigarette was unveiled at a news conference in New York last September. It has been described by the manufacturer, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, as "the world's cleanest cigarette," according to press reports. The reports also describe it as containing carbon monoxide and nicotine, as well as being promoted as "ashless," in addition to "smokeless," and hence "clean."

— WHO news.



TV & RADIO

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News 2

Health ministers pledge support for victims of Israeli repression

By Rania Attalla
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Arab Health Ministers' Council ended its 13th session here Tuesday, pledging over \$250,000 worth of medical support for victims of Israeli repression in the occupied territories.

During its three-day session, the council also adopted resolutions to Arabise the teaching of medicine and health sciences in the Arab World, to give priority to Arab manufactured drugs, to reduce infant mortality rates in the area and to continue cooperating with international organisations on health matters.

The council allocated \$100,000 for 200 fully-equipped first aid kits to be delivered through the International Red Cross to the occupied Arab territories, according to the recommendations issued at the end of the conference.

Another \$100,000 would be channelled through the Jordanian Health Ministry to pay for medical expenses incurred by Palestinian victims who are forced to get treatment at Israeli hospitals. The funds will be provided by the Arab Fund for Health Development (AFHD).

"The uprising gets its share of immediate attention here (in Jordan)," Jordan's Health Minister Zaid Hamzeh told a press conference held after the council's closing session.

"There are allocations for patients who come from there to be treated both here and abroad," added Hamzeh, who is also president of the council's 13th session.

The remaining \$50,000 were allocated for the Jerusalem St. John's Hospital. In addition to these funds AFHD will immediately provide five ambulances for the transportation of victims to hospitals and health centres in the occupied territories.

For further support of medical services in the occupied territories, a committee was formed to follow up on the Islamic conference decision taken to support the construction of an Arab Hospital in Jerusalem, according to Hamzeh.

The council appealed to all Arab health ministers to continue their support for the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRC) to enable it to offer medical services to the Palestinian people.

The Syrian and Jordanian health ministries along with the PRC were assigned to prepare a full report on the Israeli inhuman measures taken against Palestinians in the occupied territories, a report which will be presented at the next World Health Organisation (WHO) meeting.

On the issue of drugs in the Arab World, the council decided that "priority will be given by all ministries of health to the registration, circulation and purchasing of medications produced in the Arab region," according to Hamzeh.

During its 12th session in Sudan, the council discussed the issue of Arabising medicine teaching in the Arab World. This year however, the council called for delegates to "request their governments to carry out the resolution through their universities and colleges starting this year," according to Hamzeh.

The council also decided that in cooperation with international health organisations, Arab countries should work towards lowering infant mortality rate by 50% by the year 1990, a recommendation made to the council by the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF).

"This percentage is a crucial indicator for the development of health conditions in any country. Our countries still suffer from high infant mortality rates, and we are now being asked to put all our efforts to lower that rate by half," Hamzeh said.

In the report presented to the council Monday, UNICEF stated that the only way to achieve 50% reduction in infant mortality rates in the Arab world is to have commitments from the government of every country at the highest level. According to the UNICEF report, the world's average infant mortality rate in 1980 was 118 per every 1000 live births.

On the issue of AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome), the council decided that an Arab committee would be formed to help fight against the killer disease through "the best available weapon: information and education about the disease," according to Hamzeh.

With regards to Iraq, Hamzeh said that the council did not receive any requests for help. "At this stage it seems that assistance is not needed. If, in the future, we are called upon to provide help, we will not hesitate."

On Monday, Lebanon had requested assistance from the council in the form of medications to fight cancer and tuberculosis. In its resolutions, the council appointed its Executive Committee to examine what the AFHD could provide in assistance.

Djibouti also requested assistance in the form of food supplies, water-transportation equipment and clothing to help victims of famine and drought.

The council also condemned Israeli brutality in the occupied Arab territories and called on the WHO and the United Nations to take the proper measures to put an end to Israeli violations of human rights.



JAPANESE ENVOY: Japan's ambassador designate to Jordan, Makoto Watanabe, Tuesday presented a copy of his credentials to Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri. Watanabe succeeds Akira Nakayama who had been transferred to another post after serving for four years as his country's ambassador to Jordan. Watanabe will however return to Japan shortly to be there when His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan makes his visit to Japan later this month (Petra photo)

Geologists end conference, cable thanks to Crown Prince

AMMAN (Petra) — Participants in a three-day Jordanian Geological Conference Tuesday sent a cable of thanks and appreciation to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan for patronising their meetings.

Concluding their three-day meetings, which started in Amman Sunday, participants called for supporting the current Palestinian uprising in the occupied Arab territories and for mobilising all Arab resources towards the goals of countering the Israeli challenges and putting an end to the Iran-Iraq war.

Participants took a number of recommendations designed to bolster cooperation with Arab

geological unions and societies and to unify all geological terms, in addition to undertaking joint studies and researches in the field of geology.

Participants further called for the exchange of information and expertise, and for coordinating the work of the geological departments in the Jordanian universities.

Participants called on all ministries concerned to absorb geologists in appropriate jobs where they are much needed, and called on the Ministry of Education to include geology as a separate subject in the curriculum of the secondary schools.

Linguistic conference opens at Yarmouk University

IRBID (Petra) — Yarmouk University President Mohammad Hamdan Tuesday opened a conference on linguistics organised by the university's English Language Department.

The president made a speech on the occasion, pointing out the importance of subjects that are to be taken up by the participants who aim to raise the performance of their students.

The four-day conference is attended by delegates from Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Libya and Algeria.

sities and the American and British cultural centres in Amman.

They will discuss subjects related to improving English language among students, the use of computers for learning English, the influence of the mother on children in teaching foreign languages and other related topics.

Delegates attending the conference come from universities in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Libya and Algeria.

Jordan, Syria continue talks on agricultural cooperation

DAMASCUS (Petra, J.T.) — Jordan and Syria are continuing talks here on promoting their bilateral cooperation in agricultural fields.

The talks are being conducted by teams led by Minister of Agriculture Marwan Hnoud and his Syrian counterpart Mohammad Ghabash.

The talks, which began Monday shortly after Hnoud's arrival here on a several-day visit, were described by the minister as aiming to achieve integration between Syria and Jordan in agricultural fields.

"Bilateral cooperation is not intended to help either of the two countries to make financial gains, but it is rather directed towards realising integration that can ensure food security," the minister said.

Such integration, he said, requires close coordination and cooperation in agricultural research programmes, carrying out joint ventures, exchange of expertise and cooperation in the development of animal wealth and food industries.

Government employees contribution to uprising amounts to JD 300,000

AMMAN (Petra) — One day's wages collected from government employees in all ministries and departments for the support of the Palestinian people's uprising in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip, amounted to JD 300,000.

The government, upon directives from His Majesty King Hussein, has deducted a one-day pay from the employees salaries within a national campaign to raise funds for the Palestinian people.

The funds are being channelled through the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Zakat Fund which also receives donations from various organisations and individuals in the Kingdom.

The JD 300,000 sum has been referred to the Zakat Fund Board Chairman Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al Khayyat who is also Minister of

Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. Khayyat speaks to preachers

Sheikh Khayyat has said that Jordan will continue to support the Palestinian people's uprising with all its power and will help the oppressed people to achieve freedom.

Addressing a meeting of mosque preachers in the Greater Amman region, the minister outlined his ministry's arrangements for helping the Palestinian and the Zakat Fund's allocations for the

victims of Israeli atrocities. He said that apart from the millions of dinars being spent annually on the West Bank's Awqaf institutions and Sharia (Islamic Law) schools and the upkeep of Al Aqsa Mosque, it has now started to pay monthly salaries to more than 130 families of those martyrs who fell during the current uprising.

The fund pays monthly assistance to more than 900 university students in the East Bank who had lost contact with their families and parents in the occupied territories, the minister said.

He said funds are being raised from individuals, organisations, banks, companies, employees and other different sources.

Special committees have embarked on a survey to deter-

mine the number of martyrs and injured people in the occupied territories with a view to helping the ministry organise the assistance programme, the minister noted.

Khayyat urged the mosque preachers to make the question of the uprising the theme of the Friday sermons in all mosques. The ministry's Secretary General Abdul Salam Al Abbadi addressed the preachers outlining the work and activities of the Zakat Fund, and the need for preachers to spread awareness among members of the public about the need for raising funds for the poor and the needy.

He also briefed the preachers on the ministry's arrangements for the coming pilgrimage season to Mecca.

Khasawneh meets Finnish press team

AMMAN (Petra) — A visiting Finnish press delegation met Tuesday with Information Minister Hani Khasawneh to discuss the Arab-Israeli conflict and other Middle East issues.

The five-member delegation, invited here by the Ministry of Tourism for a week-long stay in Jordan, heard from the minister Jordan's views on the Middle East question, the Kingdom's economic situation and the successive development plans being implemented in the country.

The two sides also reviewed relations between Finland and Jordan with the minister emphasising Jordan's desire to bolster bilateral ties in all fields.

The Finnish delegation later visited the University of Jordan and met with its President Abdul Salam Al Majali who briefed the visitors on the development of the university and the activities of its departments.

The delegation members toured the campus and inspected students activities and a number of facilities.

Khasawneh meets pan-Arab committee

Also Tuesday Khasawneh met with a committee entrusted with studying the establishment of a pan-Arab company for television production.

The committee was set up by the Arab ministers of information's standing committee to produce television programmes that can be marketed in the Arab World and abroad.

The minister briefed the committee members on Jordan's information policies serving the causes of the Arab nation and the continued support given to pan-Arab efforts in informational fields.



Information Minister Hani Al Khasawneh briefs the Finnish press delegation in his office Tuesday (Petra photo)

Surgeons to begin 16th conference Thursday

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Surgeons Society (JSS) will open its 16th conference in Amman Thursday under the patronage of Jordan University of Science and Technology President Kamel Ajlouni.

The 400 Jordanian surgeons and physicians, who will take part in the meeting, are expected to

review 33 working papers dealing with transplants, plastic surgery, burns, surgery conducted on children, patients with liver diseases, and other topics, according to the chairman of a committee preparing for the conference.

He said that the JSS has invited eight foreign specialists in surgery

to deliver lectures and take part in the conference's activities.

The JSS president told a pre-conference on the eve of the meetings that the conference will be part of the JSS's annual activities which also include seminars, lectures held at hospitals and other centres.

Arab Dentists Union meeting opens today

AMMAN (Petra) — The 15th meeting of the Arab Dentists Union and the seventh Jordanian Dentists Conference will open at Al Hussein Youth City in Amman Wednesday under royal patronage.

The two meetings organised in cooperation with the Jordanian Dentists Association (JDA) will be attended by at least 800 dentists from Jordan, Arab and foreign countries, according to the JDA president.

The pan-Arab meeting, he said, is expected to last four days during which the delegates will

review 60 working papers and 35 "scientific posters," presented by a total of 96 researchers from universities and research centres in the Arab World and abroad.

These papers all deal with dental surgery and modern trend in dealing with teeth, the president said.

The Higher Council of the Arab Dentists Union will hold six refresher courses for the benefit of delegates, during which highly skilled dentists and specialists will dwell on dental affairs in detail.

There will also be a dental exhibition displaying materials

and equipment employed in dentistry.

The dental health conditions in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip and other pan-Arab issues will also be taken up by participants in the meetings. There will also be discussions on statutes and bylaws governing the dentistry profession in the Arab World.

According to the JDA president a number of veteran dentists, who served for nearly 35 years will be honoured during the meetings.

NATIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

IPU TALKS: A Jordanian parliamentary delegation left Amman for Guatemala to take part in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) meetings due to open Friday. The delegation, which is led by Dr. Hazem Nusseibeh from the Upper House of Parliament, includes Salman Al Oudah, Rizek Al Bataineh, Edward Khamis and the parliament's secretary general.

MINISTERS VISIT JUST: Kuwaiti Health Minister Abdul Razzak Al Yousef and Bahraini Health Minister Jawad Al Arid Tuesday visited the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) and met with its President Kamel Ajlouni. They were briefed on the university's development and the activities of the medical faculty.

AL HASHIMIYEH HALL: Zarqa Municipality has announced a tender for the construction of a public hall for the municipality to be named Al Hashimiyyeh Hall which will be ready for inauguration by Nov. 14, the date of His Majesty King Hussein's birthday. A municipality spokesman said that the 335-square-metre hall will in fact serve as a cultural centre, displaying the most prominent achievements in the country under the Hashemite family, and national heritage.

HONOURING THE STAFF: The University of Jordan will hold a ceremony Saturday to honour staff members who were promoted to the post of professors or assistant professors. On Sunday, the university will hold a "Science Day" during which several prominent doctors of medicine and professors will deliver lectures.

SCOUT CAMPS: The Department of Education in Koura district has organised two scout camps for students in the preparatory and secondary school stages. A total of 160 scouts and their leaders are taking part in the three-day camp activities.

80 WOMEN GRADUATE: A group of 80 women graduated from the Haman Community Development Centre Tuesday after completing four-month training courses in dressmaking, weaving, typing and artificial flower arrangement. Ministry of social development's secretary general who attended the graduation ceremony distributed diplomas to the graduates and later opened a week-long exhibition displaying embroideries, dresses, national costumes and other items.

HUSEINIYEH ELECTIONS: The deputy governor of Ma'an announced the results of a municipal election for the town of Huseiniyyeh in Ma'an Governorate. The election, the first to be held in the town brought nine members to take charge of municipal services for the coming two years.

AMMAN CENTRE: The development of the central regions of Amman was discussed at a meeting by the Greater Amman Municipal Council held Tuesday under the chairmanship of Mayor Abdul Ra'uf Al Rawabdeh. The council discussed the subject in the light of a report presented by a special technical committee which also submitted recommendations for solutions of persisting problems impeding development of traffic directions and the business centre of the city.

Win A Prize!!

3 prizes will be given for each competition

The Dragon who does not smoke

The Dragon who smokes

The dragon is very happy when he stops smoking cigarettes he breathes fresh clean air and feels fit and healthy but when he smokes he feels very unwell. Smoking makes him smell horrible, he coughs, splutters and feels sick. What colours do you think the dragon is when he smokes and when he stops smoking?

We (the newspaper editorial staff) are asking children up to 15 to participate in our competition. The competition is for two age groups. 1) for those up to 10 years of age, and 2) for those aged 11-15 years. All entries must give the dragon a name.

Competition 1: Children up to 10 years of age

1. Colour in the dragon. The first picture shows the dragon when he does not smoke cigarettes, what colour do you think he is?
2. The second picture shows him when he does smoke — what colour do you think he is now? Colour the dragon using coloured pencils or crayons.

Competition 2: Children 11 to 15 years of age

Write in not more than 15 words why you think smoking is harmful.

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

CLOSING DATE: ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY 20 APRIL 1988

SEND YOUR ENTRY TO:
JORDAN TIMES, EDITOR, PO BOX 8710, AMMAN, JORDAN

Sponsored by: The Jordan Times, The National Jordanian Anti-Smoking Society, and Smith Kline & French Laboratories Ltd., as a medical educational advertisement. The competition will be judged by a selected panel consisting of a representative of the Jordan Times, the National Jordanian Anti-Smoking Society and Smith Kline & French Laboratories Ltd. The judges' decisions are final.

AND A WORD TO PARENTS

If you want to give up smoking for your own health and that of your family — visit your doctor — HE CAN HELP YOU.

Prizes to be won for both Competitions:—

1st Prize: JD 15

2nd Prize: JD 10

3rd Prize: JD 5

France, Iran said to have struck hostage deal

DAMASCUS (AP) — A deal has been struck under which France and Iran will resume diplomatic relations and three Frenchmen held by a pro-Iranian group in Lebanon will be released, knowledgeable sources said here Tuesday.

If there are no last-minute snags, the release could come "in the next few days," one source said.

The two sources declined to be identified but have proved reliable on hostage matters in the past. They said a special envoy of the French government spent two days negotiating with the hostage takers in their stronghold in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

They said the envoy, Alexandre Stefani, an associate of French Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, and an unidentified Lebanese businessman, returned to Damascus Monday through a checkpoint on the Lebanese-Syrian border controlled by the Syrian army.

The sources said both were involved in previous negotiations which led to the release Nov. 27 last year of two French hostages.

The three French hostages held in Lebanon are Jean-Paul Kaufman, 42, a journalist seized May 22, 1985 and two diplomats, Marcel Carton, 63 and Marcel Fontaine, 46, seized March 22, 1985. Their kidnapping was claimed by Islamic Jihad, a group loyal to Iran's leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The two Frenchmen released last November were Jean-Louis Normandin, 34, lighting engineer for France's Antenne-2 television, who was kidnapped March

8, 1986, and Roger Auque, 31, a freelance photographer kidnapped Jan. 13, 1987.

France broke relations with Iran last July in a dispute over an employee of the Iranian embassy in Paris who refused to give evidence to a French court on terrorist incidents.

The sources reporting the latest deal gave no details. But one element involved in previous negotiations, along with re-establishment of diplomatic relations, has been repayment of a French loan from Iran under the regime of the Shah.

The Beirut daily Al Safir March 31 reported progress in "secret negotiations" to free the three hostages.

Speculation about a deal heightened in Paris when Pasqua interrupted an African trip to return to Paris last week and said he would meet with a Lebanese businessman, Naghib Zaher, who lives in the Ivory Coast and Paris.

French papers reported that Zaher was involved in talks leading to the release of Normandin and Auque.

Last Saturday, Imran Adham, a Frenchman of Syrian descent who also has been involved in negotiations for the release of French hostages in Lebanon, arrived in Beirut. He made no statement and after arriving at Beirut airport could not be located by reporters.

France March 24 released a suspect, Mohammad Mohajer, a Lebanese, citing insufficient evidence to hold him for involvement in a series of 1986 bombings.

Libya dismantles special Tunisia intervention unit

ROME (AP) — Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qadhafi said Monday he ordered the dismantling of a military unit formed to act inside Tunisia if the United States used that country to attack Libya, the official Libyan news agency JANA said.

JANA, monitored in Rome, said Qadhafi also told the visiting Tunisian prime minister and cabinet that he ordered a division of troops withdrawn from the border with Tunisia.

Libya sent the troops to the border because, he claimed, before the new Tunisian government took power Nov. 7, the United States intended to use Tunisia to attack Libya, JANA said.

Tunisian Prime Minister Hedi Baccouche and his country's council of ministers came to Libya to attend a discussion of unity with members of Libya's cabinet.

Qadhafi said he also will insist on "opening the artificial borders with Egypt" and withdrawing military forces from there as part of his desire for a unified Arab Nation.

"To bolster confidence, fraternity, security and safety among the brothers in Libya and Tunisia, I announce the dismantling of the 'Badr' formation, which was to act inside Tunisian Arab territories if America used it against Libya," JANA quoted Qadhafi as telling the meeting.

"We also announce the presenting of the weapons of this formation as a gift to the Tunisian Arab armed forces," Qadhafi added.

"Those who made Nov. 7 were

among those who prevented America from using Tunisian Arab territories against Libya," said Qadhafi. He was referring to the removal of Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, who had made his country one of the most westernized nations in the Arab World.

Zine-Al Abidine Ibn Ali, the prime minister and an army general, claimed the 84-year-old Bourguiba was incapacitated by age and health and took power under a constitutional provision that allows such an act if the president dies or is declared incapacitated.

Open borders

Qadhafi also told the meeting he had announced the abolition of the border gate with Tunisia. Starting today, said Qadhafi, "Arabs in both Libya and Tunisia can enter and go out without this gate standing in their way."

The Libyan leader expressed regret that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak "had rejected the opening of the borders." He said he would send a letter to Egyptian parties and organizations that demand the opening of the border.

"Whoever refuses to open the borders means that he has not will at hand, or reflects his fear for the Zionists and the Americans who fill Egypt's streets," JANA quoted Qadhafi as saying.

"If the present Egyptian rulers are unable to achieve these unionist proposals, others will achieve them," he said. "Victory will be for these proposals. As for those who oppose them, they will end in the dustbin of history."

U.S. plans \$2 billion arms sales to Israel

WASHINGTON (R) — The Reagan administration told Congress Monday it intended to sell Israel 75 advanced F-16 C/D fighter planes for \$2 billion as a way to help bolster Israeli "security."

The new Defense Department proposal, if approved by Congress as expected, is part of a November 1987 U.S.-Israeli security agreement calling for fresh American military aid, which runs in excess of \$1.8 billion annually.

Israel already has 150 F-16s and the new, more advanced C/D models would be delivered over the next several years, Pentagon officials said.

The jets are to be made by General Dynamics Corp, the primary F-16 contractor, with Israeli coproduction, although details of the production plan were not disclosed.

The new F-16s are to take the place of the Lavi, a fighter Israel had started to build but dropped last year because of excessive costs, the officials said. It was already soaking up a major portion of U.S. military aid to Israel.

There was opposition to the Lavi programme both in the United States and in Israel, as well as opposition from American plane manufacturers who feared the Lavi would be bought by third countries in place of U.S.-built planes.

The proposed sale, which must be approved by Congress, was made as Secretary of State George Shultz was in the Middle East to press for Israeli approval of a U.S. peace plan.

Any link between the proposed sale and Shultz's Middle East mission was not immediately spelled out.

The Pentagon also informed Congress Monday of other major arms sales to the Middle East. They included sales to Egypt of 7,511 anti-tank missiles, with 106 launchers, for \$180 million and two Blackhawk helicopters for \$32 million.

The Pentagon also told Congress it planned to sell to the United Arab Emirates modification kits for five Hawk air defence missile batteries for \$168 million.

It said it plans to sell planes and missiles to Pakistan worth \$343 million, which includes 11 F-16 fighters for \$256 million and 200 Sparrow and 360 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles for a total of \$87 million.

An Israeli foreign ministry spokesman said Monday that Israel and the United States were about to sign a memorandum of understanding on economic, political and strategic issues.

Ehud Gol said details of the memorandum were still being discussed between Israeli and American officials. He declined to disclose its contents.

Israel Television said the memorandum would be signed by the presidents of the two countries in simultaneous ceremonies in Israel and the U.S. April 21.

Gol said it was too early to say when the signing would take place because some of the document's clauses were still under discussion.

Arab justice ministers urge protection for Palestinian people

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Arab justice ministers have called for international protection of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, where Israel has been trying to quell the nearly four-month-old uprising.

At the end of a three-day meeting, the ministers called Monday on the world community to pressure Israel into respecting the Geneva convention on treatment of civilians under occupation.

At least 136 Palestinians and an Israeli soldier have died in the uprising in the West Bank and Gaza.

A final statement denounced Zionist terrorism, citing reports that Palestinians had been beaten, shot, burned and buried alive by Israeli troops.

It also criticised a decision by the United States to close the United Nations office in New York of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The ministers approved a resolution on the Iran-Iraq war urging implementation of last July's U.N. Security Council resolution demanding a ceasefire. Delegates said Iraq and Syria clashed over the wording.

The ministers criticised Iran for attacks on Arab Gulf shipping. They blamed Iranian pilgrims for hundreds of deaths in clashes between Iranians and Saudi police in Mecca last July.

The meeting passed a common Arab law on personal status, which regulates marriage, divorce

and other matters in accordance with Islamic law. It was the first common law to be approved by Arab states, Kuwaiti Justice Minister Dhari Abdullah Al Othman told the closing session.

But in deference to religious minorities in the Arab World, the law is not binding. The ministers agreed to continue work on a proposed unified civil code and common regulations for registration of real estate.

Hundreds held in desert

The justice ministers' call for protection for Palestinians coincided with a report from a human rights group that hundreds of Palestinian prisoners are held in inhuman conditions with inadequate water at a desert prison near the Egyptian-Israeli border.

The Ramallah-based Al Haq Palestinian legal aid group said two of its executive members visited the Kizitzi prison at the weekend and heard reports of "harsh and inhuman conditions" from Gaza lawyer Raji Sourani, who is detained there.

The prison was opened last month as an overspill camp to house some of the 4,000 Palestinians arrested since the uprising

began in the occupied territories last December.

In a statement, Al Haq said the most acute problem faced by the prisoners was the lack of water. "Water is available only from slowly dripping taps and though the prisoners have learned to collect the water as it drips, it is never sufficient to satisfy their thirst in the desert conditions, let alone to wash or perform the necessary ablutions before prayers," it said.

TWA hijack trial to begin end of May

DUESSELDORF (AP) — The trial of suspected TWA hijacker Mohammad Hamadi is expected to start in Frankfurt at the end of May, a Frankfurt court official said Tuesday. Mohammad Hamadi was charged in February with murder, hijacking, hostage-taking and other crimes stemming from the June 1985 hijacking of a TWA plane to Beirut during which a U.S. navy diver was killed and 39 Americans held hostage for 17 days. Frankfurt state court spokesman Falk Thomas said the exact date of the trial's opening remained to be set but that it was expected at the end of next month. He added that the court will hold hearings three times a week in the case.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS BRIEFS

Tarazevich: Arms ban will not work

ABU DHABI (R) — A senior Soviet official has said Moscow was not against imposing an arms embargo against Tehran but did not believe sanctions would end the Gulf war. "We are not against an arms embargo," Georgy Tarazevich, vice-president of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, told reporters Monday night. "But we believe it will not end the war because Iran will manage to get weapons from the black market and even the allies of those canvassing for an embargo." Tarazevich, the highest ranking Soviet official to visit the United Arab Emirates since ties with Moscow were established in 1985, held talks with senior government officials on the war. He said Moscow was taking part in U.N. consultations on a possible embargo, adding: "We have to work out something, but we do not want our ties with Iran to be harmed." The United States has been pressing for an arms embargo to force Iran to accept last July's United Nations ceasefire call, but Western diplomats in the Gulf have said Moscow has been blocking the move.

Soviet air force chief meets Tlas

DAMASCUS (AP) — Soviet Air Force Commander Air Marshal Alexander Yefimov conferred with Syria's Defence Minister Lieutenant-General Mustapha Tlas on expanding military links, the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported Monday. It said the meeting at the Defence Ministry was attended by senior Syrian and Soviet officers. Yefimov arrived in Damascus from Moscow earlier Monday at the head of a large military delegation. He was greeted at Damascus airport by Syria's air force commander, Major-General Ali Malahetji and senior air force officers, SANA reported. Syria gets most of its military hardware from the Soviet Union in its drive to achieve strategic parity with Israel. SANA gave no other details on the Soviet mission. But it is the second

high-powered Soviet military delegation to visit Damascus in the last two weeks.

UAE backs Egypt's arms industry

ABU DHABI (AP) — The United Arab Emirates pledged Monday to support Egypt's arms industry. Sheikh Khalifa Ibn Zayed, Abu Dhabi's crown prince and deputy commander of the UAE's armed forces, declared as he inaugurated an Egyptian arms show: "We shall spare no effort to boost the Egyptian military industries because that contributes to the national security of the entire Arab Nation." He said that policy was being carried out on the orders of UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ibn Sultan Al Nahyan. The UAE was the first Arab country to restore diplomatic relations with Cairo last November after an extraordinary Arab summit in Amman gave the Arab World the "green light" to do so.

Israeli soldier jailed for PLO meeting

TEL AVIV (AP) — An Israeli soldier who deserted the army and met with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Europe was sentenced to three and a half years in prison for desertion and assisting the enemy, a military official said Tuesday. A military tribunal found the soldier had not harmed Israel's "security," the official said. But the court saw the soldier's contacts with the PLO as "very grave" and therefore sentenced him to five years, one and a half years of which were suspended. The soldier, whose name and rank were kept secret, deserted the army last summer and went to Cyprus and then Europe, where he initiated contacts with a member of Fatah, the main wing of the PLO, the military official said. The soldier got cold feet and cut off contacts with the group, Israeli army radio said. He was missing from Israel for 42 days, the Haaretz newspaper said. The soldier appealed his conviction to a military appeals court but was denied, the military official said.

Shultz holds talks with Jordanian, Syrian leaders

(Continued from page 1)

in Shultz's statement that neither Israel nor Arab states had made any commitment to the U.S. peace plan, Redman said: "No one has said no. Nothing has changed on that. This is something that is going to take time." Redman said King Hussein reiterated the Arab call for an international conference as the only way to achieve a Middle East peace settlement.

In an interview with Israeli editors Sunday night, Shultz made clear that the U.S. was sticking to its position of "no to a Palestinian state, (and) no to the return (by Israel) to the (pre-1967) borders." He also ruled out any dealings with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

As Shultz arrived in Damascus from Amman, a semi-official Syrian paper asked: "What is the use of this tour?"

The English-language Syria Times said Shultz's proposal for limited Palestinian "self-rule" in the Israeli-occupied territories ignored "the inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine."

Syrian newspapers also accused the United States of justifying Israeli acts of brutality and oppression against the Palestinian people, and of failing to pressure Israel to implement United Nations resolutions.

Identical editorials were published by the Arabic-language daily Tishrin and Syrian Times. The newspapers accused Washington of justifying Israeli "massacres" of the Palestinian population.

They said "acts of brutality and oppression are being perpetrated daily in the occupied Arab territories."

"The policy of shoot-to-kill, pushing Zionist settlers and soldiers to destroy properties, burn houses, and to kill women and children have become a daily

practice by Israel, which ignores the condemnation of international public opinion.

"All this is being done as the Israeli government finds full backing for its defiance of the international community and human values in the American stand which justifies these massacres."

The editorials said that if such a policy was directed against Jews, "the United States would have mobilised all its political and propaganda machinery calling on the international community to adopt deterrent steps."

"But the victims in this case are Arabs while the perpetrators are Jews. Hence, Washington's constant search for excuses and justification, to the extent of considering Israeli oppression in the occupied land a duty and a right at the same time."

Shultz went directly to the presidential palace in Damascus for talks with President Assad.

Shultz met Israeli leaders Monday but did not appear to persuade Shamir to drop his opposition. The proposals include an international conference to pave the way for direct Arab-Israeli negotiations and the principle of trading land for peace.

Shultz was not expecting to make much progress with Assad who also opposes major elements of the U.S. proposal.

"I do not want to predict that I will make any headway with President Assad," Shultz told reporters recently. "He's usually pretty firm."

Before Shultz's arrival Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaf told Reuters that the Syrian position had not changed.

An Israeli official quoted by Reuters said Shultz was seeking a compromise between a full international conference, favoured by the Arabs and rejected by Shamir, and a one-off meeting under U.S. and Soviet auspices which Shamir accepted last October but

Jordan rejected.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who backs the Shultz plan, meanwhile toughened his conditions for a peace accord.

He spelled out four "noes" rejecting negotiations with the PLO, a Palestinian state, a foreign military presence in the West Bank, and the dismantling of Jewish settlements.

Shultz held separate talks with Shamir and Peres Monday.

Speaking to Kurdish Israelis in Ein Hemed, Peres said: "No foreign army will cross the Jordan River. We will not negotiate with the PLO, and we will not allow a Palestinian state."

"Existing Jewish settlements will remain in place. There will be no dismantling."

After the Damascus talks, Shultz planned to return to Israel. He was scheduled to meet again Wednesday with Shamir and Peres, fly to Cairo to see Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and then back to Amman for more talks.

President Mubarak said Tuesday the Arabs wanted U.S. peace efforts in the Middle East to succeed but he questioned whether Shamir shared their desire.

"Where there's a will, there's a way," Mubarak told reporters who asked whether the current Shultz mission could succeed.

"On the Arab side, there is a will, and we are trying to develop this will more and more," Mubarak said. "I think Mr. Shultz is doing his best and the United States is doing its best."

"But the point is the will of Mr. Shamir, which is very important because he is one of the cornerstones of the whole problem... I can't understand him. If he is agreeing on the process or disagreeing on the process is not clear."

Carter denies knowledge of Iran arms plan

FRESNO, California (AP) — Former President Jimmy Carter says he never heard of a plan to swap military parts for the 52 Americans held hostage in Iran during the last year of his term.

"No one that I have talked to had heard of it," he added at a news conference Monday night following a speech at Fresno State University.

Newly declassified documents revealed in a House of Representatives judiciary subcommittee investigation showed the Carter administration considered offering \$10 million in military spare parts to Iran for the hostages captured in November 1979 during an attack on the U.S. embassy in Tehran.

Carter advisers scuttled the plan after determining arms dealer Houshang Lavi didn't have the backing of then-Iranian President Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr, according to documents obtained by the Miami Herald.

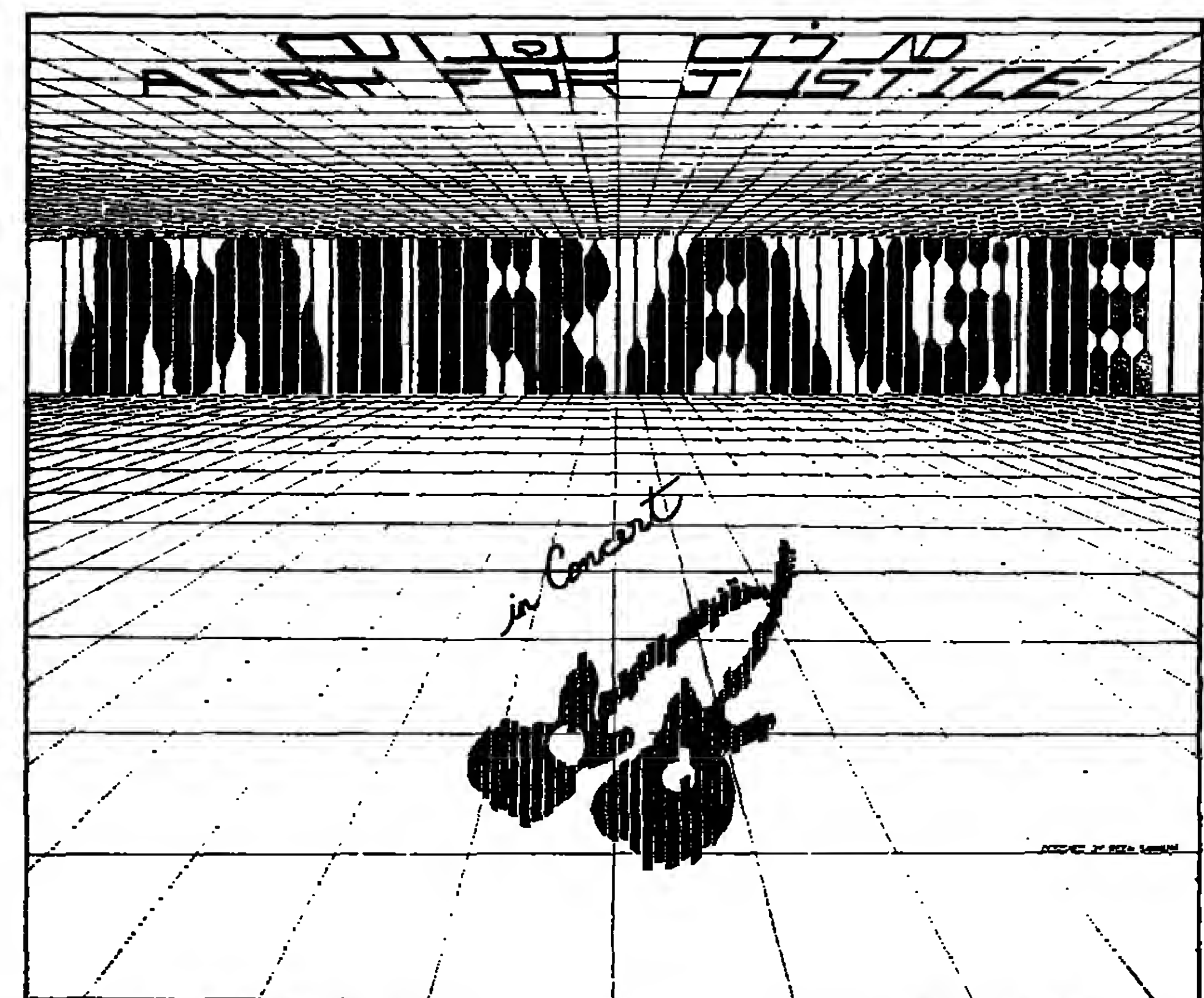
One Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) memo said Lavi offered to make a hostage exchange and handed over a seven-page list of F-14 parts. The CIA officer who wrote the memo recommended against pursuing the deal.

Carter said he never saw any of the memos and that the plan was "never seriously considered."

The documents include CIA memos to Carter's National Security Council Chief David Aaron and State Department memos by then-Deputy Assistant Secretary Harold Saunders. The papers surfaced during a hearing being held by Democratic Representative John Coyers into attempts by President Ronald Reagan's administration to trade arms with Iran for hostages seized by Iran-backed groups in Lebanon.

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Demanding 300 per cent wage increase

Lebanon paralysed by nation-wide strike

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon was paralysed Tuesday as Muslims and Christians united in a nation-wide strike called by labour unions demanding a 300 per cent wage increase.

Banks, schools, shops, restaurants, petrol stations, government offices and other businesses were closed in Beirut's mainly Christian eastern and Muslim-dominated western sectors and other major cities.

The General Confederation of Labour Unions (GCLU), which sponsored the one-day strike, said Beirut Airport, the nation's only civil aviation gateway, as well as hospitals, pharmacies, bakeries, and the media were exempt.

The 300,000-strong GCLU described the one-day protest as a "warning strike." It set April 15 as a deadline for an indefinite work stoppage, if its demand for a 300 per cent salary increase was not met.

The Lebanese parliament Friday authorised Acting Prime

Minister Salim Al Hoss, who also holds the Labour and Social Affairs portfolio, and Finance Minister Joseph Hashem to deal with the unions' demand for salary increases in the private and public sectors.

A government source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Hoss and Hashem are considering a 100 per cent "compromise" wage increase.

Cannot cope

"The government cannot give the GCLU a 300 per cent increase in salaries. Both businessmen and the state treasury cannot cope with such an increase," the source said.

"Both government leaders and businessmen fear that such a high raise as the one demanded by the

GCLU would sharply increase the inflation rate," the source, who did not wish to be named, added.

Lebanon's 13-year-old civil war has pushed the nation's inflation rate from 9 per cent in 1975 year to the current estimated level of 225 per cent.

The government source said: "Any increase in salaries would force the Lebanese pound to decline further against foreign currencies, something that will also raise prices and create additional difficulties for the working class."

The Lebanese pound, once the soundest currency in the Middle East, rated 2.5 to the U.S. dollar before the civil war. It sank to a record low of 700 to the dollar last December.

The decline of the Lebanese pound against foreign currencies has sent prices skyrocketing in a nation that imports more than 85 per cent of its needs.

The pound regained some of its value in the first quarter of 1988, rating 360 to the dollar in the Beirut Money Market last week.

Iraqi-Turkish trade to reach \$2 billion

BAGHDAD (OPECNA) — Trade exchange between Iraq and Turkey is expected to reach \$2 billion this year, it was reported here at the weekend.

The announcement was made at the end of the eighth session of the Joint Iraqi-Turkish Committee on Economic, Technical and Scientific Cooperation held during a three-day official visit by Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal.

An agreement was signed by Iraqi Oil Minister Issam Abdul Raheem Al Chalabi and Turkish

Minister of Finance and Customs Ahmet Altaptemocin.

The two sides also signed agreements on transport and communications and maritime transportation.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Iraqi First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yassin Ramadan and Ozal expressed satisfaction over the steady development of bilateral relations.

They underlined the need for further expansion of cooperation between the two neighbouring countries.

ASCA board meets

DUBAI (I.T.) — The Board of Directors of Arab Society of Certified Accountants (ASCA) held its meetings Tuesday in Dubai, during which several technical, professional and organisational subjects were discussed.

In addition, resolutions were taken to achieve ASCA's goals in attaining a higher standard for the profession in the Arab region and worldwide.

The board examined the results of the participation of ASCA on the boards of the two highest professional authorities in the world, after being elected for five years for the Board of International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC), London, and the International Audit Practice Committee (IAPC), New York.

The board also examined the progress of the Arab Certified Accountant Magazine — the only accounting magazine in the Arab World, and called on experts and professionals for greater contributions to the magazine.

A number of resolutions were made regarding the organisation of Arab examinations to meet the highest international standards.

Set of standards

In response to the wishes of a number of Arab leaders, ASCA decided to publish the set of audit standards and accounting principles in Arabic to be used as an accredited reference.

The board also discussed the arrangements for hosting the first meeting of IASC in the Arab region, which will be held simultaneously with the second Arab International Accounting Conference in Bahrain next year.

1988 APC production expected to top 1m tonnes

AMMAN (I.T.) — The Arab Potash Company (APC) expects to produce 1.3 million tonnes of potash during 1988 and 1.4 million in 1989, up from a mere 280,000 tonnes of initial production in 1983, according to APC Director-General Ali Nsour.

Nearly 70 per cent of the total production is marketed in Japan, China, India, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand and other countries in Southeast Asia, Nsour said in a lecture delivered at Yarmouk University Monday.

Of the Western countries, he said, Brazil receives the lion's share of APC exports.

In his lecture, Nsour gave details on the development of the company which was established in 1956 and began production in 1982. He said that the APC started off with a JD 4.5 million capital, rising to JD 72.45 million at present.

The Jordanian government owns 53.44 per cent of APC's capital, while the rest is owned by the Arab Mining Company, Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Libya.

The installations at the APC plants near the southern tip of the Dead Sea cost \$480 million, funded by friendly governments, Arab funds and banks, according to Nsour.

Venezuela hopes to expand oil reserves

CARACAS (R) — Venezuela hopes to increase its proven oil reserves by two billion barrels to 60 billion this year, through new discoveries and secondary recovery in existing fields, the Venezuelan Ministry of Energy and Mines announced Monday.

The ministry said in its annual report 20 new test wells will be drilled this year in an effort to increase output of light and medium crudes. Venezuela's reserves are currently dominated by lower-priced heavy and super-heavy crudes.

Exploration will centre on Eastern Monagas and Sucre states, and the area south of Lake Maracaibo, the traditional centre of Venezuela's oil industry.

The programme is expected to cost approximately \$142 million, the ministry said.

Exploration in recent years has led to the discovery of 8.6 billion barrels in probable reserves of light and medium crudes, comparable to England's North Sea oil fields, Energy and Mines Minister Arturo Hernandez Grisanti said last month.

Plans call for total crude 1988 output to remain at 1.571 million barrels per day (bpd), Venezuela's OPEC quota.

U.S. foreign affiliates plan to raise spending

WASHINGTON (USIS) — Foreign affiliates of U.S. companies plan to increase their capital spending 15 per cent in 1988 after a 4 per cent rise in 1987, the Commerce Department reports.

These affiliates reported higher 1988 spending plans in a December 1987 survey than they did six months earlier, the department said Monday. The large upward revision is attributed mostly to dollar depreciation in the fall, which requires more dollars for a given amount of spending in foreign currencies.

Another reason for the revision is more spending planned by petroleum affiliates for exploration and development, although the department now doubts whether those plans will be implemented because oil prices have fallen since the survey.

A 15 per cent rise would put

1988 spending at \$38,900 million, still below the level reached in 1982, the report said.

"Spending fell in 1983 and remained low through 1987 due to sluggish economic conditions abroad and weak petroleum markets," it said.

Auto and computer plants reported they were planning increased spending in response to increased foreign competition for global market share; while others, especially in the primary metals industry, said they were planning to expand capacity, the report said.

"Affiliates in developed countries plan a 15 per cent increase in 1988, to \$30,000 million, following a 5 per cent increase in 1987," the report said.

"Affiliates in developing countries plan a 13 per cent increase, to \$8,400 million, following a 1 per cent increase."

Report: Labour cost cheapest in Mexico

WASHINGTON (AP) — For a U.S. employer who measures his labour cost in dollars, Mexico was the cheapest country last year and Norway the most expensive, according to a U.S. Labour Department report.

The report released Monday takes into account the decrease in

the price of the dollar, and of changes in local pay rates. The cost of social insurance and other benefits are also figured in but not the relative efficiency of workers in different countries.

In dollar terms, costs in Mexico dropped to \$1.37 an hour from \$1.47 in 1986.

IBM 'has no plans to mass market semiconductors'

NEW YORK (R) — The computer giant International Business Machines Corp. (IBM) said Monday it had no plans to mass market semiconductors although it had supplied small quantities of its computer chips to competitors.

IBM officials said its sale of chips to European and U.S. competitors was not an attempt to prevent U.S. firms from becoming dependent on Japanese semiconductor suppliers.

"Over the past couple of years we have offered limited quantities of semiconductors to a very small number of companies internationally," said IBM spokesman Peter Thonis, who declined to name the companies or the amounts involved.

IBM is the world's largest maker of both computers and semiconductors, the tiny silicon wafers that are the brains of virtually all electronic equipment, from computers to microwave ovens to guided missiles.

Major competitive advantage The Armonk, N.Y.-based company considers its chips a

major competitive advantage and does not routinely sell them on the open market, and Thonis said the chip sales were not a move by IBM to enter the mass market.

Thonis spoke with Reuters after Jack Kuebler, IBM vice president and its highest-ranking engineer, disclosed the chip sales in an interview with the New York Times published Monday.

The newspaper reported that IBM has supplied some competitors with state-of-the-art computer chips for more than two years, confirming rumours in circulation for months.

It said that IBM, responding to inquiries, disclosed last week it had offered small quantities of its advanced chips to fewer than a dozen U.S. and European competitors.

The paper reported, however, that Kuebler said the shift in corporate policy was not a move to prevent U.S. firms becoming dependent on Japanese semiconductor suppliers.

Speaking with Reuters, Thonis

also rejected speculation that the chip sales were aimed at preventing U.S. computer companies from becoming dependent on Japanese suppliers or at paying the way for IBM to mass market its semiconductors.

"We are neither accepting orders for semiconductors nor are we increasing (manufacturing) capacity," said Thonis, adding that IBM aimed to "sharpen our effort competitively."

Analysts said the sales probably do not exceed \$20 million a year, compared with IBM's total yearly output of about \$3.5 billion.

IBM has played a key role in helping to ensure that the U.S. chip industry keeps pace with the Japanese, most notably with its strong support of Sematech, a consortium of American chip makers that is trying to boost U.S. competitiveness.

"If Sematech doesn't work, IBM may become a bigger source of chips to other computer companies," said Adam Culney, an analyst with Kidder, Peabody Co.

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Vows to support Aquino

U.S. pushes for Philippine bases to stay

MANILA (R) — The United States Tuesday pressed for the retention of its Philippine bases and vowed support for President Corazon Aquino at the start of formal talks on the future of its major military installations here.

Aquino, ignoring fears that the escape of a coup-planning army rebel could mean a new challenge to her rule, said through a spokesman she would not abandon her scheduled visit to China next week, the first time she has dared leave the Philippines since November, 1986.

U.S. Ambassador Nicholas Platt said at the start of talks on the future of American air and naval bases in the Philippines that the Soviet Union could turn overnight into a major military threat to Asian nations.

Platt said the agreement allowing Americans use of Clark Air Force and Subic Naval Bases had served to preserve regional peace for decades "and it must do so in the future."

Manila and Washington are reviewing the terms for the last two years of the bases agreement, which runs out in 1991. The thornier question confronting Washington is whether its former colony will agree to allow the bases beyond that date.

'Non-confrontational'

Tuesday's talks, the first of a series of negotiations expected to

last several months, ended after three hours with both sides voicing hope of their success. A Philippine spokesman said the atmosphere was "non-confrontational."

However, it was clear Americans were in for tough bargaining. Manila has hinted it wants much more than \$180 million-a-year package Washington had pledged for using the bases.

The talks opened as army threats to Aquino's rule were revived by last weekend's dramatic escape from military custody of her arch-foe in the army, Colonel Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, who is still at large.

A nervous stock market, which Monday shed value as investors worried about the prospects of another rebellion, firmed Tuesday. Analysts said fears had eased.

Officials dismissed reports of possible U.S. involvement in the escape of Honasan, who nearly ousted Aquino in a coup attempt last August.

Communists unharmed

Meanwhile, the Communist leadership said it was unharmed

by the arrest in Manila last month of some of its top officials but called on its guerrillas in the cities to prepare for a possible retreat into rural bases.

"Comrades whose movements have become extremely hampered in the cities must be ready to transfer to the countryside," the party said.

Marcos waiting... 'forever'

In another development in Honolulu, Hawaii, Ferdinand Marcos said Monday he was awaiting a Philippine government representative to being negotiating his return, but an official of the Manila government denied that any such talks had been authorized.

"I am waiting for the procedure to be completely charted," said Marcos, who was deposed as Philippine president more than two years ago. "I am waiting for whomever they send to see me."

Marcos said he had received word from supporters in his homeland that a representative of Aquino was en route to Honolulu. He declined to identify the supporters or the government representative.

"In fact, I was expecting someone today," Marcos said. "He may have to wait forever," said Tomas Gomez, the Philippine consul general in Hawaii. "The word I get from the president (Aquino) is that there are no negotiations."

Carbide ordered to pay \$192m in Bhopal relief

JABALPUR, India (AP) — A judge ordered Union Carbide Corp. to pay 2.5 billion rupees (\$192 million) in interim relief for victims of the 1984 Bhopal gas disaster, saying he had considered "the needs of the victims."

The U.S.-based multinational said it would study the decision before deciding whether to file an appeal.

Monday's ruling came on Carbide's appeal of a lower court's decision ordering an interim relief payment of 3.5 billion rupees (\$270 million). Carbide had argued that a grant of interim relief could prejudice the outcome of the Indian government's \$3 billion suit against the company.

The ruling by the Madhya Pradesh court lessened the interim award by \$78 million and ordered Carbide to deposit the sum within two months.

Victims' needs

High Court Judge S.K. Seth said he made the reduction after considering "the needs of the victims." The High Court in Jabalpur is the highest court in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh.

At Union Carbide's headquarters in the United States, company spokesman Robert M. Berzok said the company would review the ruling before deciding whether to appeal to India's Supreme Court.

"The ruling of the judge... will not serve the real needs of the Bhopal victims," Berzok said. "The High Court judge is holding Union Carbide liable, and this can only result in additional litigation while the genuine victims remain in the wings."

More than 2,800 people were killed and at least 20,000 were injured Dec. 3, 1984, when toxic gas leaked from a pesticide plant run by a Carbide subsidiary, Union Carbide of India.

The Indian government sued Union Carbide in September 1986, contending the leak was caused by negligence. The company has said it resulted from sabotage by a disgruntled employee.

India filed suit after passing a law making it the sole representative of all victims and after a U.S. District Court ruling that U.S. courts did not have jurisdiction in the case.

A Bhopal district court judge ordered the interim relief after weeks of delay in the case while Carbide and the Indian government reportedly tried to reach an out-of-court settlement.

Union Carbide offered a settlement of \$350 million before India filed its suit.

U.S. remembers Martin Luther King, 20 years after his death

MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AP) — Followers of Martin Luther King Jr. marched Monday to the motel where he was assassinated 20 years ago and promised to keep fighting to reach his "Promised Land."

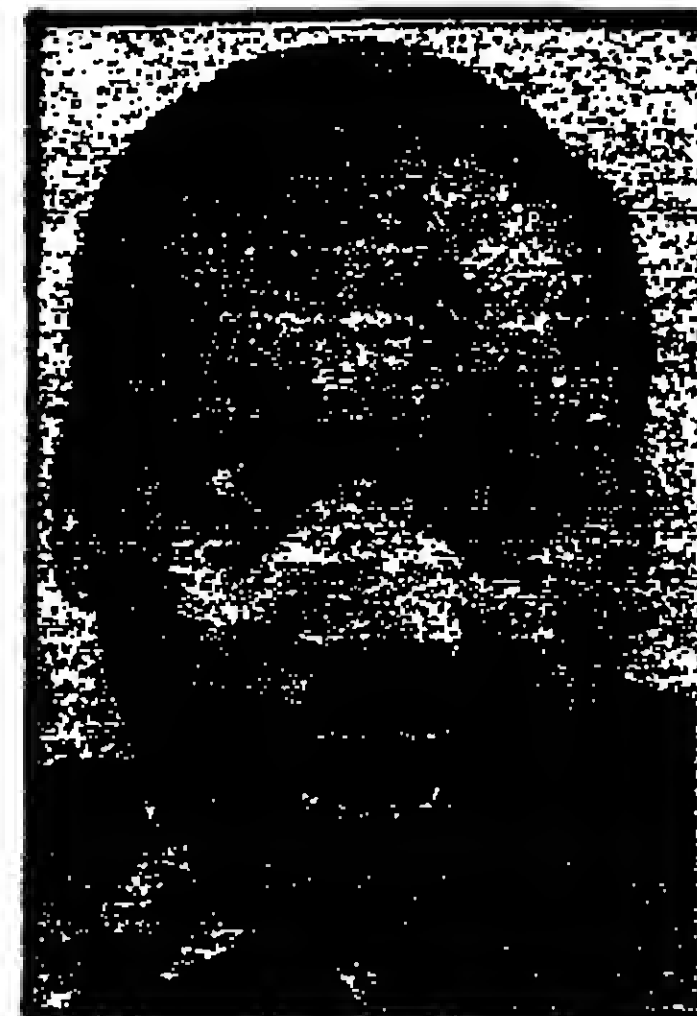
"Until we wipe out poverty in the ghetto nowhere can be safe. Nowhere can be secure, for one hungry person speaks in misery to everybody," said Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a civil rights organization founded by King.

"There ain't going to be no peace in the suburbs until there is justice in the ghetto," Lowery told about 3,000 people who marched a 3 kilometres through downtown Memphis to the Lorraine Motel.

King was assassinated there on April 4, 1968, while in Memphis to support a strike by city sanitation workers. He also was conducting a nationwide campaign to draw attention to poverty.

The day before he was shot, King delivered his last public address, saying "I've been to the mountain top... and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight, that we as a people will get to the Promised Land."

In Atlanta, King's hometown, his widow, Coretta Scott King,



Martin Luther King, Jr.

led an hour-long observance at his tomb and announced plans for a march in Washington Aug. 27, the anniversary of a civil rights march there in which King delivered his famous "I have a dream" speech.

This summer's march, she said, will concentrate on developing a legislative agenda aimed at ending poverty, racism, war and violence.

Also at the ceremony was King's sister, Christine King Farris. She recalled that on the day he was shot, "I thought on that day how long life would be with-

out Martin... and here it is, 20 years later, and we're still trying to perpetuate his legacy... and his dream."

Right and just

The Lorraine itself has become something of a symbol of poverty. At one time, the motel had about 60 rooms, but the decaying two-story building had only 12 rooms in use when the state closed it in January to make way for a museum. Opponents of the museum project, say the money should be spent turning the Lorraine into housing for the homeless.

Prior to the march to the Lorraine, the city held a memorial service in King's honour at the Orpheum Theatre, a downtown landmark. It was the first city-sponsored memorial to the slain Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Mayor Richard Hackett, who appointed the commission that organized Memphis' first memorial for the slain civil rights leader, said it is time for the city where King died to better organize its efforts to help the poor.

"Twenty years ago, Dr. King spoke of a dream. Today, this city recognizes the necessity for that dream to become a reality," Hackett said. "It is right. It is just, and it is in the best interest of us all."

Publicity taken up in U.S. murder trial

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The defence attorney in a bizarre case involving a maniacal woman, murder and dismemberment says he wants a jury to hear the case because of the widespread publicity surrounding it.

Gary Heidnik is charged with keeping four women chained to a sewer pipe in a basement torture chamber and killing two others.

"I want a jury from a less urban county. Somebody in the Poconos would know less (about the case) than somebody in Pittsburgh," said A. Charles Peruto Jr., Heidnik's attorney. The Poconos are sparsely settled mountains in Pennsylvania.

Peruto's first motion after the assignment of Judge Lynn Abraham to the case Monday morning was for the out-of-town jury.

"I don't think there is a Philadelphia around who doesn't know the case and want him" sentenced to death, the attorney said.

That motion and others are expected to take up the rest of the week, Peruto said as he and the prosecuting attorneys headed for Abraham's chambers for the first conference on pending requests.

Torture

Heidnik was arrested shortly after a woman, who said she had been held in his basement, led police to his North Philadelphia house. Three half-naked, starved women were found chained there in the pre-dawn hours of March 25, 1987.

The limbs of another were found packaged in the kitchen freezer and the body of a second woman, whom police say Heidnik killed, was found in a southern New Jersey forest later that day.

The woman who led police to the house testified at Heidnik's preliminary hearing that one victim died while hanging by an arm from the basement ceiling. Police say Heidnik then dismembered her body in a bathtub.

The other victim died when Heidnik touched her manacles with electrical wires while she stood in water, the woman testified.

Insane

Peruto said he will argue his client was insane.

"Schizophrenia in its simplest form represents dual personality... It's a classic case of Jekyll and Heidnik," he said, playing on the title of Robert Lewis Stevenson's 1886 novel "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

Peruto said he has documents that will prove Heidnik was the subject of LSD tests by the U.S. Army in the early 1960s. The tests, he said, aggravated his client's schizophrenia.

The Pentagon has acknowledged performing chemical research with LSD on 741 volunteers from 1955 to 1967. In a 1981 report, the Pentagon said most soldiers suffered no significant damage as a result.

Peruto declined to say whether Heidnik would take the stand.

Easter massacre shocks Colombia

BOGOTA (R) — Hooded gunmen who shot at hundreds of peasants celebrating Easter in a northern Colombia village and killed 28 might have been looking for a single person, the governor of the Cordoba province said Monday.

Provincial Governor Jose Gabriel Amin said one of the theories police and army investigators were pursuing was that the killers might have been looking for an outsider mingling with local citizens at the Easter Sunday festival.

He said villagers in the hamlet of Mejor Esquina in Cordoba province, some 400 kilometres northwest of Bogota, said they had noticed a stranger at the feast in the afternoon.

Amin said there was no indication so far of the attackers' political affiliation, if any, and added they could be linked to drug traffickers.

Police said eight of 10 gunmen arrived by car at about 11 p.m. and opened fire on villagers dancing in a house.

Using weapons Amin described as like U.S.-made AR-15 rifles, they shot a random, killing several youths and one woman.

After shooting at the crowd, the attackers forced everyone to lay down and killed a few more people on the floor.

U.S.: New Delhi explosions accidental

WASHINGTON (R) — Explosions which shook the American centre in New Delhi Monday were an accident caused by construction workers and were not linked to a visit by U.S. Defence Secretary Frank Carlucci, the U.S. State Department said.

"We have been informed that Indian subcontractors working on a welding project inside the U.S. Information Service (USIS) facility in New Delhi accidentally caused the explosion of an acetylene tank," spokeswoman Phyllis Oakley told reporters.

In New Delhi, a U.S. embassy spokesman and an eyewitness said a fire followed three explosions at the modern, glass-encased building.

The explosions occurred only a few hours after Carlucci arrived in the Indian capital for talks with Indian officials expected to centre on Afghanistan and technological cooperation.

Oakley said there was speculation the incident was related to Carlucci's arrival but that it was an accident that occurred during work on the building's air conditioning system.

No injuries were reported but the centre, which is about five kilometres from the main U.S. embassy complex in New Delhi's heavily guarded diplomatic enclave, suffered damage estimated at \$100,000 to \$300,000, she said.

Firemen doused the fire at the building, which houses a library, Oakley said.

She said no other U.S. embassy buildings were affected by the incident.

The centre is situated near New Delhi's most popular shopping area and has often been a target for anti-American protests. Security has been tightened in recent weeks and a more secure entrance built.

'Noriega has damaging material on U.S. officials'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Panamanian military ruler General Manuel Antonio Noriega holds information suggesting certain U.S. officials at least condoned drug trafficking in Central America, a former aide to Noriega alleged Monday.

Jose I. Blandon, a former intelligence official and consul general for Panama who defected last year, produced a document Noriega sent to the country's U.S. diplomatic offices in February saying he has proof that American officials knowingly established policies that supported people involved in the drug business.

"General Noriega says he has proof of the involvement of (U.S.) government authorities in drugs in Central America," Blandon said in Spanish.

WORLD NEWS BRIEFS

Anti-nuclear campaigners demonstrate

ALDERMASTON, England (AP) — Police said 10,000 anti-nuclear campaigners gathered outside the government's nuclear weapons research centre Monday on the 30th anniversary of Britain's first "Ban the Bomb" march. Thames Valley Police Chief Inspector Laurie Fray said it was "a mostly quiet and peaceful demonstration," although police arrested four people for criminal damage and public order offences. Defence Ministry police said they arrested six more protesters. About 1,000 of the demonstrators walked the 83 kilometres from London to the Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Research Establishment in Berkshire County.

Arizona governor impeached

PHOENIX, Arizona (R) — Evan Mecham Monday became the first U.S. state governor in 59 years to be removed from office on impeachment charges. The Arizona State Senate, sitting as a court of impeachment, convicted Mecham of obstructing justice and illegally using \$80,000 in state funds to help his car dealership. It failed by three votes to disqualify Mecham from ever holding Arizona public office again. Mecham also faced a recall election on May 17, but the Arizona Supreme Court is expected to cancel the election because of his removal from office. Mecham, a 63-year-old conservative Republican who ran for governor five times before being elected in 1986, is only the eighth governor to be convicted on impeachment charges. The last, Henry Johnston, was removed in Oklahoma in 1929.

Mother Teresa to visit South Africa

CALCUTTA (R) — Mother Teresa, whose care for the destitute and dying won her a Nobel Peace Prize, will visit South Africa in May to plan a mission there. The 78-year-old head of the Missionaries of Charity order told Reuters that her Calcutta headquarters Monday that the visit had been cleared by the South African government. The Yugoslavia-born nun, who later became a citizen of India, will also need clearance for the visit from India, which is a leader of a campaign against Pretoria's apartheid policy of racial separation. "We see no problem in giving Mother Teresa the clearance. We know that her mission is always humanitarian," said an Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman.

Dalai Lama unlikely to accept offer

LONDON (R) — The Dalai Lama was expected Tuesday to reject Peking's offer to let him return to Tibet if he renounces his campaign for his homeland's independence, one of his spokesmen said. "I think it would be out of the question," the spokesman, Tsewang Topgyal, told Reuters ahead of a private briefing which the Tibetan spiritual leader was due to give journalists. The Dalai Lama arrived in Britain Monday for a 12-day private visit amid a row over charges that the British Foreign Office tried to stop him making political statements for fear of harming London's relations with Peking.

By Rory Channing
Reuters

NAIROBI — Rains are slowly sweeping north through Africa, rolling back a drought that has ravaged much of the continent.

The drought "looks like it might break," said Peter Usher, meteorological chief at the Nairobi-based United Nations Environment Programme.

The rains, breaking dry spells that have lasted as long as seven years in some areas, promise desperately needed relief for millions of people threatened by starvation — if they can hold out until the next harvests.

Signs of change

First signs of a change in fortunes came late last year, when torrential rains broke the back of a five-year drought in South Africa.

They have since carried north to Kenya, on the Equator, and are continuing into Ethiopia, where more than five million people face famine, and Sudan.

Usher told Reuters that a vital pressure belt, the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone, which follows the sun south and then north again, was weak as it moved down the continent last year, and produced poor rains.

"But on its reversal and passage northwards it seems to have assumed what could be called a more normal pattern, and rains in southern Africa appear to have been good."

"In Kenya they have started on time in March and appear to be good. There is every indication now that they will be good as they move north into Ethiopia and Sudan," he said.

The pressure belt can gain or

lose strength as it changes direction, but usually does not do so once it is northern or southern bound.

The rain could, therefore, benefit all or most of the 20 countries which only months ago formed a giant drought belt, tracing an arc from Mauritania in the west through Somalia on the east coast south to Swaziland.

Precarious prospects

But many people may continue to suffer hunger until present food crops, or those planted in coming months, grow.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), in its latest crop report for Africa on Feb. 26, warned of precarious prospects for food supplies despite hefty foreign handouts.

Of 4.6 million tonnes of food aid needed to tide countries south of Sahara through to the next harvests, more than one fifth — needed in 35 countries — had yet to win pledges.

Ethiopia, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Chad, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Niger needed exceptional relief, it said.

An end to drought is only part of the answer. Civil war reduces the ability of Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Sudan to feed their peoples.

The rains could also create fertile hunting grounds for huge swarms of locusts sweeping North and West Africa in the worst plague for 30 years, and threatening to move south.

Already, the rains have taken a heavy toll. Hundreds of people have died and flood damage runs into millions of dollars.

In Mozambique, where an estimated four million people face

starvation, floods forced the evacuation of 15,000 people from the Limpopo Valley.

Cyclone-borne rains damaged rice fields, felled coconut trees, temporarily knocked out clean water supplies in Beira, and forced the closure of a road from that Indian Ocean port to Harare. Beira is an important artery to the sea for landlocked Zimbabwe.

Excessive rains reduced Zimbabwe's tobacco harvest, its main export crop, and threatened cotton and maize harvests. Sunny

weather needs to continue in order to overcome the effects, the state farm management advisory agency, AgriNet, says.

Downpours in Lesotho last October created widespread havoc, prompting the government to declare a state of emergency.

Damage apart, some countries have reaped a bonanza. Malawi's President Kamuzu Banda has predicted a bumper harvest after last season's drought left shortages of staple maize.

Botswana declared a crippling,

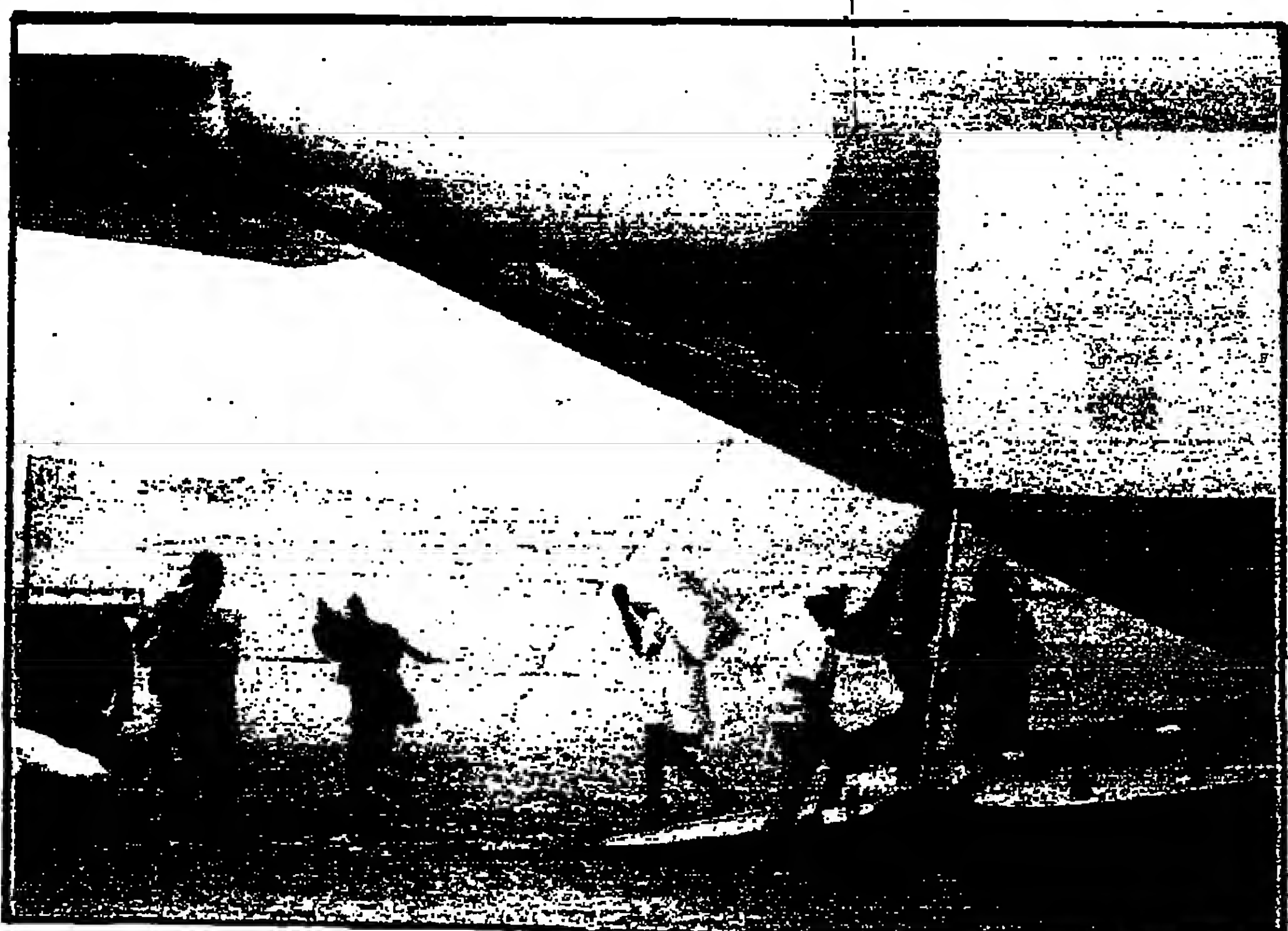
seven-year drought over.

'Drought is normal now'

Usher warns against complacency, however. Development of long-term forecasting tools is at an early stage in Africa, which still has limited understanding of the climate.

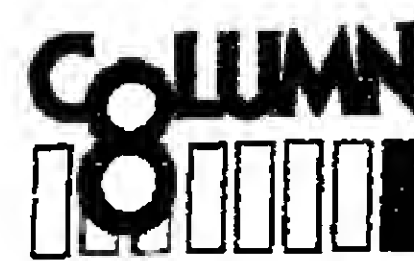
"While one drought is often followed by another drought, or a wet period by a wet period, one cannot rely on that."

"One should always plan for drought in Africa, or be prepared for drought, because drought is normal now," he said.



Unloading Red Cross aid for victims of famine in Ethiopia: Relief — at least some — may be near as

heavy rains have finally hit drought-stricken African countries (File photo)



Dispelling yet another myth

CHARLESTON, South Carolina (AP) — The popular myth may be of a caveman dragging off his woman by her hair, but women were probably behind many of the major inventions of Prehistoric times, a researcher said Monday. "Women may be responsible for the major technological innovations in Prehistory — the invention of pottery, horticulture and agriculture, basketmaking, weaving and textiles," said Joan Gero. Gero, an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of South Carolina, is one of the organisers of an international conference to discuss women's roles in Prehistory. The five-day conference, which opens Tuesday, "is the first archaeological conference designed to separate our gender roles in Prehistory," she said. Much of what will be discussed flies in the face of the conventional wisdom. For instance, it's generally given in archaeological circles that men were the toolmakers in Prehistoric times, Gero said. But some researchers are suggesting that women were responsible for making tools and pottery. "The irony is that huge chunks of the archaeological record may in fact be the result of women's labour," Gero said. "Eighty per cent of the archaeologists in the world use pottery to sort out time periods."

Never again

GENEVA (R) — U.N. Under-secretary-General Diego Cordovez, 52, says he will probably turn to farming after six years of trying to mediate the Afghan conflict. "After this, I will have to do something entirely different, like taking care of a farm or something, which I intend to do," the cigar-puffing Ecuadorian told journalists during a pause in the deliberations. "I will never do it (mediation) again, this I can assure you." Cordovez has a horse ranch in the Andes in Ecuador. He said he had had to learn patience during the Afghan talks. "Everything takes about four times longer than it would take in Latin America, which is a long time," he said.

Gag

FRAMPTON ON SEVERN, England (AP) — A 26-year-old Englishman gulped 2,000 baby eels in 20.5 seconds Monday to win the World Eel Eating Championship for the sixth straight year. Bartender Mark Ryder of Gloucester in western England ate about 2 pounds (0.9 kilograms) of the gray, wormlike baby eels known as evers to retain his title. The Guinness Book of Records awards the world record to Peter Dowdeswell who in 1978 ate an uncounted number of eels weighing 1 pound (0.45 kilograms) in 13.7 seconds.

Miniature Koran rivalry grows

DUBAI (R) — Who owns the world's smallest Koran? Claims have been made in Iran, Poland and Yugoslavia but a family in Dubai has one that is even smaller. Mona Tarissli told Reuters her handwritten, rice-paper volume, measuring 1.8 centimetres (three-quarters of an inch) by 1.4 centimetres (five-eighths of an inch), has been in her Lebanese family for generations. The red Koran, which she wears in a locket, outdoes a 2.5 centimetre by 1.5 centimetre (one inch by five-eighths of an inch) volume in Yugoslavia whose owner claimed it as the world's tiniest last month.

Totally medieval

ROME (R) — Roman artist Angelo Camerino da Greccio says he has made seven medieval-style chastity belts, complete with padlocks, in the past five years to meet orders from jealous Italian husbands. Camerino, 59, whose work has included restoring frescoes in some of Rome's most famous churches, cast his first chastity belt for an exhibition to mark the achievements of feminism. During the exhibition, he was approached by a travelling salesman from Reggio Calabria, in the far south of Italy, who asked if he would adapt the belt to fit his wife. "He told me he was plagued by jealousy," Camerino told journalists. Six more orders followed with several southern men bringing their wives to Camerino's workshop for individual fittings and modifications including linings made of leather or silk. At two million lire (about \$1,600) each, Camerino's steel chastity belts command prices worthy of works of art. "I regard them as sculptures," he said.